Legal
Services
Society

British Columbia
www.lss.bc.ca

News Release

April 17, 2008

Raising legal aid awareness at Law Day

Vancouver, BC — A unique installation at the Vancouver Public Library during Law Day this Saturday is part of a campaign to raise public awareness about legal aid in BC.

"This is a continuation of a campaign we began in 2005 in response to ongoing evidence that most people are unaware of the range of legal aid services available in BC," says LSS Executive Director Mark Benton, QC.

Benton, who is also participating in Saturday's public forum on access to justice, says "it's crucial that potential clients know we are here and that we have various ways to help them with most types of legal problems. And if we can't help, we can usually refer them to someone who can."

The installation will be outside the library's Alice McKay Room throughout the day on April 19th. The public forum will take place in this room from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. LSS will also have a display table in the main library concourse, where the public can find out more about legal aid services.

Rethink Communications, a cutting-edge advertising firm in Vancouver, worked with the Legal Services Society (LSS) on a pro bono basis to produce the installation as well as two very inventive public service announcements—one for TV and one for radio. Both spots focus on a family law scenario.

"Everyone who's seen these ads is thrilled with them," says Benton. "We're very lucky that Rethink wanted to work with us on this project; they've done an amazing job."

Benton says the availability of legal aid is an important component of both an effective justice system and a democratic society. "More and more, research is showing us that unresolved legal matters, as often as not, are the result or the cause of other social, economic, and health problems.

"Helping people solve their legal problems isn't just good for the individuals concerned, it's good for the rest of us because it contributes to stronger, healthier, and safer communities," he explains.

Dyna Graphics of Vancouver provided considerable pro bono work to build the installation. Rethink also developed a transit shelter poster for the society. It was displayed in 10 Vancouver locations from December to February thanks to the support of the City of Vancouver's Cultural Affairs Office and CBS Outdoor JC Decaux.

For further information, contact:

Mark Benton, Executive Director
Legal Services Society
(604) 601-6004

LSS is an independent, non-profit organization that has provided legal aid to people with low incomes in BC since 1979.

Legal representation is available for serious family, child protection, and criminal issues. It is also available for some immigration, mental health law, and prison law matters.

Legal advice is available at most courts through duty counsel and by telephone through LawLINE and the Brydges Line (both are province-wide toll-free lines).

Legal information is available through Legal Information Outreach Worker (LIOW) services, LawLINE, plain language publications, and Internet services, including the Family Law in BC, LSS, and LawLINK websites. (See www.lss.bc.ca for most of our publications, our catalogue, and website links.)

*To contact the **LSS Call Centre** and **LawLINE**, dial: (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland) or 1-866-577-2525 (toll free from outside the Lower Mainland).*